

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 AGRE-00
STR-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 ITC-01 SP-02 L-03 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 /078 W
-----045544 081705Z /41

R 071338Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6013
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMCONSUL CASABLANCA POUCH
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS RABAT 4113

STATE PASS AGRICULTURE/FAS

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, MO
SUBJ: MOROCCAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS - IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.
AGRICULTURAL TRADE

REF: RABAT 4066

SUMMARY. RECENTLY IMPOSED MOROCCAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS, BOTH RECLASSIFICATION OF COMMODITIES AS TO IMPORT REGIME AND IMPOSITION OF PRIOR IMPORT DEPOSITS ON MANY ITEMS, ARE LIKELY TO HAVE RELATIVELY MINOR IMPACT ON MOST U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO MOROCCO. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TWO KINDS OF IMPORT RESTRICTIVE MEASURES RECENTLY IMPOSED BY THE GOM AS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS MEASURES REPORTED IN REFTEL ARE LIKELY TO HAVE SOME ADVERSE IMPACT ON U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS OF UNCLASSIFIED

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CERTAIN PROCESSED AND PREPARED FOODS BUT LITTLE ON THE BULK COMMODITIES THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE MAJOR SHARE OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO MOROCCO OF ABOUT \$70 MILLION IN 1977.

2. ONE SET OF RESTRICTIONS RECLASSIFIES ITEMS ACCORDING TO THREE IMPORT REGIMES ENCOMPASSING ALL MOROCCAN IMPORTS. VIRTUALLY NO PRODUCTS OF INTEREST TO U.S. AGRICULTURE HAVE BEEN SWITCHED

FROM LIST A (FREELY IMPORTED) TO LIST B (SUBJECT TO LICENSING). ITEMS SWITCHED FROM LIST B TO LIST C (IMPORT PROHIBITED) INVOLVE A SMALL DOLLAR AMOUNT OF U.S. EXPORTS, CHIEFLY IN BTN20 (VEGETABLE, PLANT AND FRUIT PREPARATIONS), 21 (VARIOUS FOOD PREPARATIONS), AND BEER. COMPLETE ANNOTATED LIST HAS BEEN POUCHED TO USDA/FAS/ITP. PULSES AND OTHER ITEMS WHICH WERE ALREADY ON LIST C HAVE, OF COURSE, REMAINED THERE.

3. THE SECOND SET OF RESTRICTIONS REQUIRES THE IMPORTER TO DEPOSIT 25 PERCENT OF THE IMPORT PRICE OF COMMODITIES INTO A NON-INTEREST BEARING CENTRAL BANK ACCOUNT FOR SIX MONTHS. PRELIMINARY NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS AND TALKS WITH IMPORTER ASSOCIATIONS SHOW THE FOLLOWING AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES EXEMPT REPEAT EXEMPT FROM IMPORT DEPOSIT:

WHEAT, FATS AND OILS FOR INDUSTRIAL USE, CRUDE ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE OILS IN FLUID STATE, TOBACCO, SUGAR AND TEA. THESE EXEMPTIONS COVER MAJOR U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS IN 1977 TO MOROCCO WITH EXCEPTION OF SOYBEANS AND COTTON.

4. COMMENTS:

A) CEREAL IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION IMMEDIATELY APPLIED FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE EXEMPTION TO COVER BARLEY AND CORN AS WELL AS WHEAT. NO PRIOR CONSULTATION HAD TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT.

B) SPECIALIZED USE OF U.S. COTTON LIKELY TO MEAN ITS CONTINUED IMPORT DESPITE DEPOSIT. ONE COTTON IMPORTER HAS INFORMALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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INQUIRED ABOUT CCC CREDIT FOR COTTON, INDICATING HE STILL EXPECTS TO MAKE PURCHASE FROM U.S.

C) FOR SOYBEANS, IMPORT DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT MAY SLOW RECENT RAPID GROWTH OF MOROCCAN SOYBEAN IMPORTS FROM U.S. HOWEVER, NEED TO KEEP RECENTLY OPENED MILLS OPERATING SOMEWHAT NEAR CAPACITY PLUS DEMAND FOR SOYBEAN MEAL BY GROWING POULTRY SECTOR COULD MEAN IMPACT WILL BE RELATIVELY SLIGHT. MOROCCO HAS NOT UP TO NOW IMPORTED SOYBEAN MEAL. CRUDE SOYBEAN OIL APPARENTLY EXEMPTED FROM PRIOR DEPOSIT.

5. EMBASSY WILL REPORT FURTHER ON SPECIFIC PRODUCT COVERAGE OF NEW MEASURES AS HARD INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, IMPORT CONTROLS, AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RABAT04113
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780280-1112
Format: TEL
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780785/aaaactxg.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60576479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 RABAT 4066
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2086251
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS - IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. AGRICULTURAL TRADE
TAGS: EAGR, MO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60576479-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014